

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

IN THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application. Please amend the claims as follows.

1. (currently amended) A method of validating a customer in a retail membership club, the method comprising:

receiving a membership validation request, including identifying indicia, from a remote retail location, the identifying indicia being extracted from an identification document of a user by an identification document reader at the remote retail location;

querying a remote database for validation of the customer;

receiving an indication of membership validation from the database;

and

transmitting the indication to the remote retail location wherein the identification document is one or more members selected from the group consisting of a driver's license, a passport, a green card, a state issue identification card, and a federal identification card.

2. (original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

if the indication is positive, transmitting information about the customer's purchase for storage in the remote database.

3. (original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
if the indication is positive, providing the customer access to the remote
retail location.

4. (canceled).

5. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the retail
location is a fuel dispensing station.

6. (canceled).

7. (currently amended) A method of reducing drive-offs at a fuel
dispensing station comprising:

receiving a fuel dispensing authorization request, including identifying indicia,
from the fuel dispensing station, the identifying indicia being extracted from an
identification document of a customer by an identification document reader of the fuel
dispensing station;

querying a database of customer records for authorization of the customer;

receiving an indication of customer authorization from the database; and

transmitting the indication to the fuel dispensing station, and wherein the
identification document is unusable for payment ~~not used for prepayment~~.

8. (previously presented) The method of claim 7, wherein an off-site terminal includes the database of customer records.

9. (previously presented) The method of claim 7, further comprising transmitting a fuel dispenser enablement signal to the fuel dispensing station to enable a fuel dispenser at the fuel dispensing station, if the indication is positive.

10. (previously presented) The method of claim 7, further comprising storing the identifying indicia at least until the customer completes fuel dispensing, if the indication is positive.

11. (previously presented) The method of claim 10, further comprising releasing the identifying indicia if the customer pays for the dispensed fuel.

12. (previously presented) The method of claim 10, further comprising storing the identifying indicia in the database if the customer does not pay for the dispensed fuel.

13. (previously presented) The method of claim 10, further comprising generating a drive-off ticket that includes the identifying indicia if the customer does not pay for the dispensed fuel.

14. (previously presented) The method of claim 10, further comprising providing the identifying indicia to law enforcement personnel if the customer does not pay for the dispensed fuel.

15. (previously presented) The method of claim 7, further comprising notifying the customer of a reason for refusal of authorization, if the indication is negative.

16. (previously presented) The method of claim 15, further comprising providing the customer information about a past due balance or outstanding warrant, if the indication is negative.

17. (currently amended) A drive-off reducing indicia identifying identification document for use on a fuel dispenser at fuel dispensing stations, wherein the identification document comprises a magnetic strip containing identifying indicia provided by a customer, the magnetic strip being read by an identification document reader and queried against a database containing customer records, wherein said database transmits an indication to the fuel dispensing station enabling the fuel dispenser and allowing the customer to dispense fuel wherein the identification document is unusable for payment.

18. (currently amended) The identification document of claim 17, wherein said identification document is not used for prepayment.

19. (previously presented) The identification document of claim 18, wherein the identification document is one or more members selected from the group consisting of a membership card, a driver's license, a passport, a green card, a state issue identification card, and a federal identification card.

20. (currently amended) The identification document of claim 19, wherein the identification document is selected from the group consisting of a driver's license, a passport, a green card, a state issue identification card, and a federal identification card.

Please add the following new claims:

21. (new) A method for remote authorization of fuel dispensing comprising the steps:

receiving a fuel dispensing authorization request, including identifying indicia, from a fuel dispensing station, the identifying indicia being extracted from an identification document of a customer by an identification document reader of the fuel dispensing station, the identification document being unusable for payment;

querying a database of customer records for authorization of the customer;

receiving an indication of customer authorization from the database; and

responsive to a positive indication, enabling the fuel dispensing station to dispense fuel.

22. (new) A method according to claim 21 wherein the steps of receiving a fuel dispensing authorization request, querying a database and receiving an indication are carried out by a central terminal in communication with the fuel dispensing station.

23. (new) A method according to claim 22 wherein the step of enabling the fuel dispenser to dispense fuel is carried out at least in part by the central terminal upon receiving a positive indication.

24. (new) A method according to claim 22 wherein the step of enabling the fuel dispenser to dispense fuel is carried out at least in part by an attendant.

25. (new) A method according to claim 21 wherein the step of enabling the fuel dispenser to dispense fuel comprises:
transmitting the indication to the fuel dispensing station.

26. (new) A system for remote authorization of fuel dispensing comprising:

a database for storing customer records;

a central terminal in selective communication with the database, the central database being configured for receiving customer identification indicia from a fuel

dispensing station, querying the database for authorization of the customer, and receiving an indication of customer authorization from the database; and

a fuel dispensing station, comprising

a fuel dispenser,

an identification document reader configured for extracting the identifying indicia from an identification document presented by a customer, the identification document being unusable for payment for fuel dispensed by the fuel dispensing station, and

a processor configured for receiving the identifying indicia from the identification document reader and transmitting a fuel dispenser authorization request including the identifying indicia to the central terminal.

27. (new) A system according to claim 26 wherein the central terminal is further configured to transmit a fuel dispensing enablement signal to the fuel dispensing station in response to receiving a positive indication of customer authorization.

28. (new) A system according to claim 26 wherein the central terminal is further configured to transmit the indication of customer authorization to the fuel dispensing station in response to receiving a positive indication of customer authorization and wherein the processor of the fuel dispensing station is further configured for receiving the indication of customer authorization.

29. (new) A method for remote authorization of fuel dispensing comprising:

receiving a fuel dispensing authorization request, including identifying indicia, from a fuel dispensing station, the identifying indicia being extracted from an identification document of a customer by an identification document reader of the fuel dispensing station;

querying a first database of customer records for authorization of the customer;

receiving an authorization response from the first database, the response including an indication of authorization or indication that the database contains no record for the customer;

responsive to receiving an indication that the first database contains no record for the customer, querying a second database of customer records for authorization of the customer and receiving an indication of authorization of the customer from the second database; and

responsive to a positive indication, enabling the fuel dispensing station to dispense fuel.

30. (new) A method for obtaining authorization of fuel dispensing comprising:

extracting identification indicia from an identification document of a customer using an identification document reader at a fuel dispensing station, the identification document being unusable for payment;

transmitting a fuel dispensing authorization request including the identifying indicia to a central terminal for use in querying a database of customer records for authorization of the customer;

receiving an authorization indication from the central terminal.

31. (new) A method according to claim 30 further comprising:

responsive to a positive authorization indication, enabling the fuel dispensing station to dispense fuel.

32. (new) A method for remote authorization of fuel dispensing comprising:

receiving a fuel dispensing authorization request, including indicia extracted from a customer-presented document by a document reader of the fuel dispensing station, the document being unusable for payment;

querying a database of records associated with the indicia;

receiving an indication of authorization from the database; and

responsive to a positive indication, enabling the fuel dispensing station to dispense fuel.

33. (new) A method according to claim 32 wherein the document is an identification document and the indicia include identification information.

34. (new) The method of claim 33, wherein the identification document is one or more members selected from the group consisting of a driver's license, a passport, a green card, a state issue identification card, and a federal identification card.

35. (new) A method according to claim 32 wherein the steps of receiving a fuel dispensing authorization request, querying a database and receiving an indication are carried out by a central terminal in communication with the fuel dispensing station.

36. (new) A method according to claim 35 wherein the step of enabling the fuel dispenser to dispense fuel is carried out at least in part by the central terminal upon receiving a positive indication.

37. (new) A method according to claim 37 wherein the step of enabling the fuel dispenser to dispense fuel is carried out at least in part by an attendant.

38. (new) A method according to claim 37 wherein the step of enabling the fuel dispenser to dispense fuel comprises:
transmitting the indication to the fuel dispensing station.